

THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A medical electrical lead system, comprising
a medical electrical lead including a proximal end, a distal portion, and an elongated lumen extending from the proximal end into the distal portion; and
a pre-formed j-shape stylet including a proximal end, a distal end, a substantially straight distal segment extending from the distal end, a curved intermediate segment extending from the substantially straight distal segment, a substantially straight proximal segment extending from the curved intermediate segment toward the proximal end, and a taper zone extending within the curved intermediate segment and having a gradual: ~~uniform~~ decrease in diameter;
wherein the j-shape stylet is slideably received within the lumen of the lead such that the curved intermediate segment of the stylet imparts a similar curve to the distal portion of the lead.
2. (original) The medical electrical lead system of claim 1, wherein the taper zone of the stylet extends from a first diameter within the substantially straight distal segment to a second diameter within the curved intermediate segment, the second diameter being greater than the first diameter.
3. (original) The medical electrical lead system of claim 2, wherein the first diameter within the substantially straight distal segment coincides with the distal end of the stylet.
4. (original) The medical electrical lead system of claim 1, wherein the taper zone of the stylet extends from a first diameter within the substantially straight proximal segment to a second diameter within the curved intermediate segment, the first diameter being greater than the second diameter.

5. (original) The medical electrical lead system of claim 1, wherein the curved intermediate segment sweeps around approximately 210 degrees.
6. (original) The medical electrical lead system of claim 1, wherein the curved intermediate segment sweeps around approximately 180 degrees.
7. (original) The medical electrical lead system of claim 1, wherein the curved intermediate segment sweeps around between approximately 180 degrees and approximately 210 degrees.
8. (original) The medical electrical lead system of claim 1, wherein the lead further includes an extendable or retractable helix terminating the distal portion of the lead.
9. (currently amended) ~~The medical electrical lead system of claim 2.~~ A medical electrical lead system, comprising:
a medical electrical lead comprising a proximal end, a distal portion, and an elongated lumen extending from the proximal end into the distal portion; and
a pre-formed j-shape stylet comprising a proximal end, a distal end, a substantially straight distal segment extending from the distal end, a curved intermediate segment extending from the substantially straight distal segment, a substantially straight proximal segment extending from the curved intermediate segment toward the proximal end, and a first taper zone extending within the curved intermediate segment and having a gradual decrease in diameter;
wherein the j-shape stylet is slideably received within the lumen of the lead such that the curved intermediate segment of the stylet imparts a similar curve to the distal portion of the lead;
wherein the taper zone of the stylet extends from a first diameter within the substantially straight distal segment to a second diameter within the curved

intermediate segment, the second diameter being greater than the first diameter;
and

wherein the J-shape stylet further includes a second taper zone extending distally from a third diameter within the substantially straight proximal segment to a fourth diameter, the third diameter being greater than the fourth diameter and the fourth diameter being approximately equal to the second diameter, and
a separator zone extending between the first taper zone and the second taper zone,
the separator zone having a diameter approximately equal to the second diameter
and the fourth diameter.

10. (original) The medical electrical lead system of claim 9, wherein the first diameter within the substantially straight distal segment coincides with the distal end of the stylet.
11. (original) The medical electrical lead system of claim 9, wherein the fourth diameter resides within the substantially straight proximal segment.
12. (original) The medical electrical lead system of claim 9, wherein the fourth diameter resides within the intermediate segment.
13. (original) The medical electrical lead system of claim 9, wherein the curved intermediate segment sweeps around approximately 210 degrees
14. (original) The medical electrical lead system of claim 9, wherein the curved intermediate segment sweeps around approximately 180 degrees.
15. (original) The medical electrical lead system of claim 9, wherein the curved intermediate segment sweeps around between approximately 180 degrees and approximately 210 degrees.

16. (original) The medical electrical lead system of claim 9, wherein the lead further includes an extendable 1 retractable helix terminating the distal portion of the lead.
17. (currently amended) A pre-formed J-shape stylet for use with a medical electrical lead, comprising:
 - a substantially straight distal segment extending from a distal end;
 - a curved intermediate segment extending from the substantially straight distal segment;
 - a substantially straight proximal segment extending from the curved intermediate segment toward a proximal end; and
 - a taper zone extending within the curved intermediate segment and having a gradual-~~uniform~~ decrease in diameter.
18. (original) The stylet of claim 17, wherein the taper zone extends from a first diameter within the substantially straight distal segment to a second diameter within the curved intermediate segment, the second diameter being greater than the first diameter.
19. (original) The stylet of claim 18, wherein the first diameter within the substantially straight distal segment coincides with the distal end of the stylet.
20. (original) The stylet of claim 17, wherein the taper zone extends from a first diameter within the substantially straight proximal segment to a second diameter within the curved intermediate segment, the first diameter being greater than the second diameter.
21. (original) The stylet of claim 17, wherein the curved intermediate segment sweeps around approximately 210 degrees.

22. (original) The stylet of claim 17, wherein the curved intermediate segment sweeps around approximately 180 degrees.
23. (original) The stylet of claim 17, wherein the curved intermediate segment sweeps around between approximately 180 degrees and approximately 210 degrees.
24. (currently amended) ~~The stylet of claim 18, further comprising~~ A pre-formed J-shape stylet for use with a medical electrical lead, comprising:
a substantially straight distal segment extending from a distal end;
a curved intermediate segment extending from the substantially straight distal segment;
a substantially straight proximal segment extending from the curved intermediate segment toward a proximal end; and
a first taper zone extending within the curved intermediate segment and having a gradual decrease in diameter, wherein the first taper zone extends from a first diameter within the substantially straight distal segment to a second diameter within the curved intermediate segment, the second diameter being greater than the first diameter;
a second taper zone extending distally from a third diameter within the substantially straight proximal segment to a fourth diameter, the third diameter being greater than the fourth diameter and the fourth diameter being approximately equal to the second diameter; and
a separator zone extending between the first taper zone and the second taper zone, the separator zone having a diameter approximately equal to the second diameter and the fourth diameter.
25. (original) The stylet of claim 24, wherein the first diameter within the substantially straight distal segment coincides with the distal end of the stylet.

26. (original) The stylet claim 24, wherein the fourth diameter resides within the substantially straight proximal segment.
27. (original) The stylet of claim 24, wherein the fourth diameter resides within the intermediate segment.
28. (original) The stylet of claim 24, wherein the curved intermediate segment sweeps around approximately 210 degrees
29. (original) The stylet of claim 24, wherein the curved intermediate segment sweeps around approximately 180 degrees.
30. (original) The stylet of claim 24, wherein the curved intermediate segment sweeps around between approximately 180 degrees and approximately 210 degrees.